

Tuolumne County
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CO 8-511

Alicia L. Jamar
Clerk of the Board
of Supervisors

Elizabeth Logan
Assistant Clerk

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF TUOLUMNE**

Elizabeth Bass, *First District*
Mark V. Thornton, *Fourth District*

Paolo Maffei, *Second District*

Teri A. Murrison, *Third District*
Richard H. Pland, *Fifth District*

August 5, 2008

Mary D. Nichols, Chair
California Air Resources Board
1001 I St.
Sacramento, CA 95814

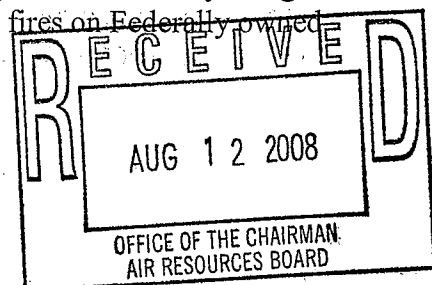
RE: Climate Change Scoping Plan, June 2008 Discussion Draft

Dear Chair Nichols:

Tuolumne County welcomes the opportunity to comment on the June 2008 Discussion Draft of the Climate Change Scoping Plan, and appreciates the efforts of ARB to reach out to local governments during this process. However, we are concerned that the document does not adequately address the serious issue of catastrophic wildfire, and believe that wildfire mitigation and prevention are vital to ARB's success in meeting the goals set forth in AB 32.

As you are aware, in May 2008, Governor Schwarzenegger issued Executive Order S-03-08, which specifically directed CalEPA and the California Resources Agency to oversee the Climate Action Team's development of measures for wildfire fuels reduction and biomass utilization. In light of the Executive Order, the current rampant wildfires around the state, and the Governor's recent emergency declarations, we are troubled that no such measures have been outlined in the Scoping Plan.

Recent wildfires statewide have had major impacts on air quality, contributing significantly to California's carbon and particulate emissions. As the wildfire season progresses, thousands of acres of forest lands will needlessly burn, releasing even more carbon and further contributing to our poor air quality. Catastrophic wildfires are typically on United States Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management, and US Park Service lands, and we maintain that many of those fires, along with the corresponding emissions, could be prevented if Federally owned forest lands were more efficiently managed. We are concerned that the Draft Scoping Plan makes only a vague mention of fuels reduction and fails to address emissions from fires on Federally owned forest lands.



Tuolumne County strongly urges ARB to include in the Final Draft Scoping Plan a firm commitment by the state to join with local governments to advocate at the federal level for enhanced management on Federal government owned lands, as well as an extensive program to quantify wildfire emissions that could be avoided through better forest management practices. This is vital not only in meeting the goals of AB 32, but more importantly to improving the quality of the air and public health. We thank you for your consideration of our comments.

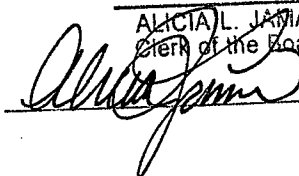
Sincerely,



RICHARD H. PLAND
Chair, Board of Supervisors

CC: Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
Members, California Air Resources Board

I hereby certify that according to the provisions of Government Code Section 25103, delivery of this document has been made.

By:  ALICIA L. JAMAR
Clerk of the Board

No.

95-08

Filed

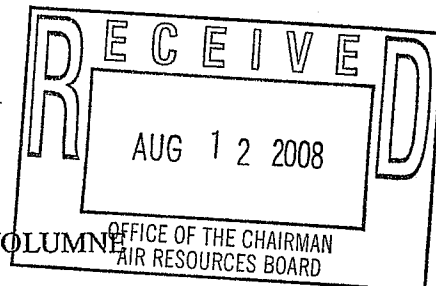
August 5

, 2008

By

Alicia Spence

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



RESOLUTION
OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF TUOLUMNE

WHEREAS, catastrophic wildfires continue to threaten lives, property and the natural resources of the state of California; and

WHEREAS, the insurance losses for the 2007 Fire Season in Southern California were \$1.6 billion and the Angora Fire in the Tahoe basin was more than \$150 million alone, insurers have paid out in excess of \$8 billion to thousands of policy holders from the top 10 California wildfires since 1970; and

WHEREAS, the estimated loss of employment from the 2007 Southern California fires was in excess of \$500 million; and

WHEREAS, California is approximately 50% publicly owned land and 50% privately owned land but many rural counties have substantially higher percentages of federally owned land; and

WHEREAS, the County of Tuolumne has over 1,085,500 acres of federally owned land which is 77% of the total land in the County; and

WHEREAS, California has over 43 million acres of federal land, much of which has not been adequately managed to mitigate the risk of catastrophic wildfire; and

WHEREAS, two of the three largest wildfires in California in the past 100 years began on federally-owned land; and

WHEREAS, many acres of dead and decaying trees remain in the national forests within Tuolumne County due to lax forestry management practices on federal lands; and

WHEREAS, millions of dollars are spent each year fighting fires on our federal lands; and

WHEREAS, the escalating costs of fighting fires on federal land over the last 10 years has significantly diminished the available resources for the critically needed prevention measures that can minimize these catastrophic fires; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Forest Service and Department of Interior have spent over \$1 billion on fire suppression every year since 2000 with suppression costs now consuming over 50% of the total wildland fire budget, as compared to 13% of the total fire budget in 1991, leaving few resources for critically needed preventive maintenance of our national forests, national parks, and other federal lands in the west and throughout the country; and

WHEREAS, the resources to manage these federal lands to reduce fire risk would be a small investment relative to the skyrocketing costs of fire suppression; and

WHEREAS, the State of California has made significant strides towards reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires on state and private lands such as ranking lands as to the level of fire hazard, requiring 100 feet of defensible space around homes, requiring ignition-resistant materials on all new construction that is built in any Fire Hazard Severity Zone within State Responsibility Areas, any Local Agency Very-High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, or any designated Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Area, and many other things to not only address preservation of life and property but the environmental risks of large scale wildfire as well; and

WHEREAS, the increased risk of catastrophic wildfires in Tuolumne County will result in harmful secondary environmental effects, including impacted watersheds, increased air pollutant emissions, and threatened habitats of sensitive wildlife species; and

WHEREAS, approximately *eighty percent* of the State's developed surface water supply originates on watershed lands within our rural counties. California's residents use a portion of this water for domestic, commercial, agricultural, industrial, recreational, and other beneficial uses and these rivers, lakes, and watershed lands also serve as habitat for hundreds of species of fish and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, the detrimental effects on these watersheds affect all of California, not just rural California; and

WHEREAS, the increased risk of catastrophic wildfires significantly impacts the levels of greenhouse gases in Tuolumne County; and

WHEREAS, the mitigation of wildfire emissions is vital to reach the goals stated in the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32); and

WHEREAS, the Draft AB 32 Scoping Plan, released in June 2008, fails to adequately address the need to mitigate wildfires and the importance of quantifying and modeling wildfire emissions on private, state, and federal lands; and

WHEREAS, there continues to be a widely recognized extremely high risk of catastrophic wildfires in Tuolumne County due to unnaturally heavy fuel loads and the early drying of wild land vegetation; and

WHEREAS, the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors calls for immediate measures to be taken to prevent imminent catastrophic wildfires.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the County of Tuolumne Board of Supervisors declares that there is an ongoing emergency due to the threat of wildfire in California, that the state and the local governments have taken many steps to resolve this issue and now requests that the Governor take an active role at the federal level to demand that the United States Forest Service and the Department of Interior take action in California's federal wild and forest lands to do the prevention and maintenance work required to mitigate the risk of catastrophic wildfires.

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF TUOLUMNE ON August 5, 2008

AYES: 1st Dist. Bass NOES: _____ Dist. _____
2nd Dist. Mayer _____ Dist. _____
3rd Dist. Merrison ABSENT: _____ Dist. _____
4th Dist. Thornton _____ Dist. _____
5th Dist. Pland ABSTAIN: _____ Dist. _____

[Signature]

CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ATTEST: [Signature]
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

No. 95-08

THE FOREGOING INSTRUMENT IS A CORRECT COPY OF
THE ORIGINAL ON FILE IN THIS OFFICE



ATTEST: [Signature]
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
County of Tuolumne

I hereby certify that according to the
provisions of Government Code
Section 25103, delivery of this
document has been made.

ALICIA L. JAMAR
Clerk of the Board
By: [Signature]